The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor according to the International, Legislative, and Judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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SAVE FOOD—Help Relieve Famine Abroad

WHOLE NO. 1839 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, JULY 9, 1946 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 36, NO. 28

LABOR, USA

Washington, D. C.—The first 1946 edition of the American Federation of the Air, broadcast on the "Labor, USA" program over the American Broadcasting Company network, included the following outstanding feature articles to supplement the news:

Prices Soar As Lid Goes Off

By ROBERT J. WATT

AFL International Representative

If there was any doubt whatever of the imperative need of continuing price controls, what happened when OPA expired should provide the final answer.

Despite President Truman's appeal to the patriotism of businessmen, farmers and merchants, the legal death of OPA became the signal for the most acute epidemic of inflationary price increases in the history of our Nation.

Rents jumped sky-high almost instantaneously. Forty-four State Governors to impose emergency regulations to freeze rates. Every housewife was more at once faced with sharp boosts in the price of such staples as bread, milk and meat. The spiraling is just beginning to gather momentum. Unless it is stopped in its tracks, we have it on the authority of the outgoing Economic Stabilization Director, Chester Bowles, that the cost of living of the American people may double in the next three weeks.

This emergency provides a clear-cut test as to whether our democracy can meet and overcome a major challenge in the security of its economy.

Prices, let it be remembered, constitute only half of the picture. The public must realize that Government wage controls ended with the death of OPA. It would be idle to hope to maintain wage ceilings after prices have burst through the roof.

American workers who depend upon their weekly wages for a living cannot afford to pay a billionaire prices on an average income of about $40 a week. Unless price control is restored and vigorously enforced, wages will have to go up correspondingly. That will mean further price increases and then more wage increases until the dizzy spiral of inflation grabs hold and drags us down with it. That is no idle theory. I have seen it happen within the past six months in many countries of Europe.

The question one hears on every hand is—"Why doesn't the Government do something about it?" President Truman has done his part. He vetoed an OPA extension bill which would have forced prices up just as high as they are now going. But Congress failed.

It is up to Congress now to correct its dangerous error. It must act at once to restore price controls and save the American people from the cold-blooded robbery by profiteers. The American people demand such action. They have voiced their mandate in the greatest torrent of mail and telegrams received in the Nation's capital in years. Unless the members of Congress respond to this emergency appeal with a sound and constructive new OPA law, they may find themselves swept out of office by an angry electorate next November.

The Forgotten Man

By HERBERT S. THATCHER

Associate Counsel for the AFL

The forgotten man is still being forgotten—at least by Congress. In all the tumult and shouting on Capitol Hill, he is unable to make himself heard, and that is why organized labor is going to bat for him.

There are four million of these forgotten men and women in America—four million oppressed wage earners and their families who cannot afford the cheapest kind of lobbyists to plead their case.

These workers in sub-standard industries, who produce many articles vital to the comfort and necessity of the American people, are still being paid a starvation wage of 40 cents an hour—a maximum of $16 a week for a 40-hour week. With the cost of living as high as it is and going up steadily, it seems impossible that any individual, let alone a family, can get along on that kind of income.

Yet Congress is doing nothing about this emergency situation. To be more accurate, certain interests in Congress are preventing the majority from taking any action to correct such conditions.

Here is how the matter now stands. Several weeks ago the Senate, after long delays, finally approved a bill to raise the minimum wage in interstate industry from 40 cents to 65 cents an hour. The measure is now in the House. There it was approved by the House Labor Committee and sent to the House Rules Committee, which must clear all legislation before the House can act. The Rules Committee has thus far refused to let the bill come up on the floor for a vote.

This is an undemocratic procedure. It is a barefaced attempt on the part of a reactionary minority to stifle the will of the majority. It is a cruel denial of justice to the underprivileged.

Some business interests oppose the increase in the statutory minimum wage on the ground that it would be inflationary. That is a short-sighted and untenable position. It can never be inflationary in America to allow its citizens to earn enough to provide for the bare necessities and comfort of life.

It is far more dangerous, in my opinion, to business as well as to the individuals directly affected, to keep a large part of our population in a submerged class, with insufficient income to buy what they need. Unless the Rules Committee releases the measure for immediate consideration by the House, industry and agriculture will not be able to sell their products in large quantity and we may be faced with another depression.

Therefore, we appeal to all American Federation of Labor members and to the American people as a whole to demand by letters and telegrams that the House Rules Committee release this important legislation and permit their elected representatives to vote on it.

Congress Blocks Housing

By BORIS SHISHKIN

Secretary of AFL Housing Committee

This week, house-hungry Americans in every city and town looked anxiously to the House of Representatives to give a green light to a full OPA extension. The new Taft-Wagner-Ellender-Taft Post-War Housing Bill, which the Senate had approved by a thumping vote on April 15, had been marking time for over six months on the shelf of the powerful House Banking and Currency Committee.

The chairman of this committee, genial and canny Kentuckian, Brent Spence, battle-scarred veteran of the Capitol Hill wars, had let the bill rest, finally succeeded in getting his group to hold hearings on the bill. But, as the eleventh hour of the Congressional session was running out, the opposition every day became more vocal and more confident that it could win.

This bill, S. 1592, bears the stamp of approval of more ordinary, average Americans than any piece of far land before Congress.

Who is for it? The millions of veterans who have sent from the war and those need for homes in the most desperate. Hundreds of Legion posts, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Veterans' Committee and AMVETS—every veterans' organization in the country. Also, the CIO, the AFL, farmers and homekeepers. National League of Women Voters, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the American Association for Social Security, the FWTA—all national women's organizations and clubs went on record for it. Then those who know the local housing need best—the mayors of our cities and towns went down the line for the bill. Finally, scores of progressive industrialists and bankers also called for it. And the American Federation of Labor, which first proposed the program, spoke for millions of American wage-earners who wanted, needed and could afford decent homes.

Who, then, the opposition? Here is what has happened and what is happening right now. A small, but rich and powerful lobby of real estate brokers, speculative lumber dealers and mortgage lenders has swarmed upon Congress for the last-minute kill of S. 1592.

A picked elite squadron of men who know the ropes, has been retained for the attack, led by a former Congressman. For the past few months, at dinners in fashionable Washington hotels, at cocktail parties held on nearby Virginia estates, the spadework of opposition is skillfully being done, to thwart the will of the people.

If enacted, S. 1592 will assure construction of better homes. It will make them available on easier terms. It will provide good new homes for millions of low-income families. It will help to break the strangle-hold of the high-interest lenders, the speculators and the profiteers. They make more money by building cheap homes and selling them at high prices. There is no profit in building good low-priced and lowest homes for the many. That takes real enterprise and hard work. As a spokesman for the Chamber of Commerce candidly told a Congressional Committee: "the poor belong in the poorhouse."

Let us tell Congress that all of us will be richer, have better houses and happier lives if S. 1592 is enacted into law. Let us tell them that we need a better home which you can afford, write your Congressman right now. Tell him you realize that he support the Wagner-Ellender-Taft housing bill. Tell him you demand quick enactment of S. 1592.

Truman Signs Hobbs Bill After Clark Assures Him Labor's Rights Are Safe

Washington, D. C.—President Truman signed the Hobbs Bill, imposing penalties on labor unions or officials interfering with goods in interstate commerce, but only after assurance by U. S. Attorney General Tom Clark that the legislation could not be construed as interfering with labor's basic rights as guaranteed by labor laws.

In a formal message to Congress, the President declared he signed the measure upon the assurance of the Attorney General that it could not be interpreted "to deprive labor of any of its rights, except those existing the right to strike, picket and take other peaceful, concerted action."

Thus, by this unusual step of placing before Congress his and the Attorney General's construction of the new law, he made his interpretation of the measure part of its legislative record to guard against any intent destanding of its scope by any court.

Labor leaders who had urged veto of the bill were inspired by grave fear that its wording might be considered as outlawing strikes and picketing.

The President emphasized that he was assured by the Attorney General that nothing in the bill would "repeal, modify or affect in any way any of the protective pieces of labor legislation such as the Railway Labor Act, the Norris-LaGuardia Act, the Wagner Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Walsh-Healey Act, the Bacon-Davis Act, the Sugar Act and the Railway Labor Act." He also stressed the fact that "the great protective safeguards which the Congress has given to organized labor in the exercise of its fundamental rights."

Mr. Truman made it clear that when he vetoed the Case Bill June 11, he expressed "full accord" with Section 7 of that measure, which contained the provisions of the Hobbs Bill.

"Section 11 of the Case Bill," he added, "seriously weakened the protection afforded to labor by the Norris-La Guardia Act, and correspondingly crippled the exceptions contained in Section 7 of the Case Bill. The present act, standing alone, is not subject to this objection."

Attorney General Clark issued a statement declaring that the bill as a whole must be construed "in the light of interpretative statements made during the Congressional debate on the measure," which, he said, made it evident it was not the purpose of the bill to interfere with legitimate union activity.

Among statements cited to bear out his interpretation, the Attorney General cited one by Rep. Hobbs (D.), Alabama, author of the bill, who stated the measure "exempts from the operation of the law any conduct under the anti-trust statutes, under the Norris-LaGuardia Act, the WLRB Act and the Railway Labor Act." The so-called Big Four labor laws have been termed the Magna Carta of labor.

"On this understanding," the President declared in signing the bill, "I am approving the bill."

The measure makes it a felony, carrying a fine up to $10,000 or up to 20 years in prison, or both, for illegal interference with goods in interstate commerce.

Meanwhile, in New York City, a test case challenging the constitutionality of the new law, was predicted by the attorney for New York Local 807 of the International Teamsters (AFL).

Green Gives 4-Point Plan

Washington, D. C.—In an editorial written for the American Federationist which is partially reproduced below, AFL President William Green lays down a four-point program to help guide unions through the perilous days ahead.

By WILLIAM GREEN

This period of world revolution places on our free trade unions a special responsibility to preserve and strengthen as well as to defend democratic institutions for the whole country and this hemisphere. Observe these safeguards:

(1) Keep your unions free from Communist control. Communists use unions to promote the party.

(2) Carry on effective bargaining and other union activities in good faith to assure workers continuously rising standards of living and management dependable work contracts.

(3) Resist the efforts in the field for cooperation between unions and management for the mutual advantage of those the industry serves.

(4) Be on guard against cooperation with Communist Front organizations and party followers that will carry the party objectives.

No trade unionist can be neutral in this world crisis in which democracy and human liberties are at stake throughout the world. The roots of democracy are in the principles of the Christian religion.

Every time a crisis in labor affairs ties up a large portion of our economy there is a tendency to resort to the solution by compulsion by governmental regulations and penalties. Such demand ignores the fact that strikes are the culmination of a series of efforts to adjust views on matters of joint concern, and that they usually result from the unsatisfactory application to work problems, it provides that representatives of workers and management shall meet promptly after the signing of work and set up the machinery to put the contract into effect. It rests upon recognition of mutual interests in production and in the distribution of returns on joint work.

Such a procedure is practical and effective. Here is an approach to equality in bargaining.

The first step which the Federal Government should take in a program to prevent strikes is a well-equipped Department of Labor headed by an experienced person who knows labor problems. Then, an effective conciliation service is necessary. Such service should be staffed by persons skilled in wage rates, productivity, labor costs, and a wide range of other information made readily available for all workers by a labor conciliation service.

Finally, emphasize the need for constructive collective bargaining.

Such a program would help the public to assume its responsibility for standards in order to enjoy uninterrupted production.

Labor has in the past been the principal dependence in lifting standards of living permanently to new high levels. The only safe way to establish them is to increase the effectiveness of collective bargaining. The right to strike distinguishes the free worker from the slave. The right to strike involves the foundation of our free democracy. But as workers value this right, they must use it with wisdom and responsibility. Equally essential is it that employers learn the value of responsible collective bargaining in good faith and not try to trick the union into indiscretions.

Bill To Make Closed Shops Illegal Is Vetoed By Louisiana Governor

New Orleans.—Labor scored a major victory when a bill to make closed shop contracts illegal in Louisiana was vetoed by Governor H. L. Davis.

As the action came only a few days before the State Legislature, by constitutional limitation, was scheduled to adjourn, labor was jubilant and highly unlikely that the measure could be passed over the veto.

In his message to the Governor he took the view that the Cleveland Bill, if it were enacted, would be a step to encroachment upon Federal enactments as the Labor Relations Act, the Railway Labor Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act. He referred to the other measures which are pending in the State Legislature's calendar as "more restrictive."

10 OF EVERY 12 VETERANS AT WORK OR IN SCHOOL

Washington, D. C.—A report of the United States Employment Service shows that 10 of every 12 veterans discharged by June are at work or in school.

USES Director Robert C. Goodwin formed the record gratifying and stated that "for the third straight month the backlog of World War II veterans not at work has been reduced, notwithstanding continued discharges of service men from the armed forces."

RAISE FOR FURNITURE UNION

San Francisco, Calif.—The AFL Furniture Workers Union and San Francisco employers have signed an agreement whereby pay raises of 10 cents to 22 cents an hour have been granted to 2,000 workers in 18 local and East Bay furniture plants. The increases are retroactive to February 6.

JOBS INCREASE IN CLEVELAND

Cleveland, Ohio.—A survey by the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce shows the second largest monthly annual gain since 1940. The gain during June an increase of 3,000 workers, marked a 5 percent rise in 100 industrial plants.

Senate Fiddles With OPA As Inflation Sweeps Nation

Self-Discipline By Labor Urged By Green In Crisis

Washington, D. C.—The following message from AFL President William Green, appearing in the AFL Federationist, is entitled "Essential Congress passes a new bill extending OPA powers, was written for the July issue of Labor's Monthly Survey:

The present period of OPA brings a responsibility to business and to labor for carrying on policies that will safeguard the interest of all. They are already in the current of inflation and some price increases are inevitable to readjust production to more satisfactory levels. Minor temporary increases can be absorbed with little permanent change in the purchasing power of our wages. Major price increases and increased volume of production.

Our safety lies in getting through this period of transition with no major strikes, lockouts or stoppages of production. Such major changes will be cumulative in effect and may start the chain of dangerous inflation. Some employers' organizations are wisely taking action against price and rent increases.

For their own safety the wage earners of the United States should exercise self-discipline, and good judgment and refrain from taking ill-considered and unwise action pending action by Congress. Labor will then be in a position to demand appropriate holding prices and the especially rent levels. Wage earners can best stabilize their wage dollars by helping to increase volume of production which can wipe out scarcities and the dangers of rapid inflation.

As workers in a free economy let's first strengthen our foundations so that our strongholds will weather the difficulties. As citizens of a democracy we must preserve our rights by insuring the general welfare.

AFL Building Trades Dept. Signs Agreement to Aid Housing Program

Washington, D. C.—Marking a long step toward insuring uninterrupted development of the Government's vast emergency home-building program, the Building and Construction Trades Department of the AFL, created "conservation of manpower standing" with Housing Expediter Wilson W. Wyatt signifying agreement "to use every possible effort and power to bring about a settlement of any industrial conflict that may threaten a stoppage of work."

Signatories to the agreement for the AFL were R. E. Gray, acting chairman of the Executive Council of the Building and Construction Trades Department; Scott Hemphill, secretary-treasurer. Wyatt and his chief general deputy, Kirby Smith, signed for the Government.

Under the agreement, a Construction Labor Advisory Committee was created by Wyatt. It will be composed of Mr. Gray, secretary-treasurer; Strickers, Marine Firemen; Harry Bates, International Association of Bridge, Structural and Ornamental Iron Workers; Hugh Fullerton, International Union of Operating Engineers; President Edward Brown, International Shoet Metal Workers; President Edward Brown, International Electrical Workers, and Howard Organizer Thomas O'Brien, International Teamsters.

The memorandum said in part:

"The Building and Construction Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor and its affiliated Building and Construction Trades Councils throughout the Nation are prepared to provide the maximum degree of cooperation to the National Housing Expediter in furthering the progress of the Emergency Housing Program. National and International Unions in the Building and Construction Trades are prepared to render their best services nationally, regionally, and locally in meeting the housing emergency by getting the job done sooner than it has been done with speed.

"The parties will make their cooperation with the Housing Expediter effective in all phases of the program, it is the desire of the Building Trades Department to establish a working relationship with his office which would make it possible to resolve after full consideration such operating problems as may arise; would enable the Building Trades representatives to provide the Housing Expediter with such advice and assistance as his staff may need; and would assure the ready flow of information to the Building Trades regarding the policies and operating procedures formulated in the administration of the program."

Believe It Or Not! Curran Blasts Communists in NMU

New York City.—This is one for Ripley! Believe it or not, Joe Curran says he's having trouble with the Communists.

Yes sir, we're talking about Joseph Curran, who has been the constant scourge of the Stalinite Communists in the National Maritime Union (AFL) ever since the NMU was founded.

But, apparently, even a worm can turn, although there is some evidence that perhaps the Communists turned against Curran first.

For in a world that is the Pilot, the union's publication, Curran accused the Communists of "falsely" circulating rumors that he had "sold out" the membership in the recent shipboard wage negotiations.

That was only one count in his indictment. He also accused the Communists of using NMU organizing funds for political purposes. With the Union payroll up to $1,000,000 a year, the organization had a $12,000 deficit in March and went "in a hole more" in April, Curran reported.

"I've got people on the payroll," the union's President somewhat naively added, "but I have yet to find out what they are doing."

He went on to say that Communist activity in the union are breaking their backs to see that no one holds office except those that they put their blessings on and they are attempting to discredit anyone who refuses to handle the Communist Party line."

Observers were somewhat doubtful of the true significance of the Curran revolt. Some even went so far as to suggest that it was a bid for the independent votes of union members, so as to forestall any other candidate with anti-Communist policies from running against Curran in 1947.

However, coming on top of Morris Muster's resignation from the CIO Furniture Workers Union on the ground that Communists had captured control of the organization, Curran's blast may be an that much additional confirmation of widely-held belief that many CIO unions are dominated or controlled by Communists or are just plain lousy with them.

TOM MOORE DIES AT 67; CANADIAN LABOR LEADER

Ottawa, Can.—Tom Moore, 67, veteran labor leader who retired from active life two years ago after 25 years' service as pres. ent of the Canadian Trades and Labor Congress, died here after result of a stroke suffered in 1942.

Mr. Moore was a native of Leeds, England, settled in Niagara Falls in 1899. He joined the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners and became a practicing printer until coming to Ottawa in 1919. He represented Canada at Conferences at Geneva, London, Geneva, Washington, Amsterdam and Kyoto, Japan, and for several years was president of the governing body of the International Labor Organization.

AFL OPENS ROME, GA., OFFICE

Rome, Ga.—George L. Googe, State AFL organizer, has announced the opening of an office here as part of the AFL drive for a million new members.

M. W. MITCHELL, 72, DIES; EX-HEAD OF STONECUTTERS

Indianapolis, Ind.—Michael W. Mitchell, former international president of the Journeymen Stonecutters' Association of North America, died at his home in this city.

Mr. Mitchell was 72 years old. He retired in 1939, after serving as president of the organization for over 25 years, and was well known in labor circles throughout this country and Canada.

JOBLESS CLAIMS RISE

Chicago, Ill.—State Labor Director Gordon announced that the number of persons receiving unemployment compensation in Illinois increased by 10,770 to a total of 136,110 in May, and the amount paid in claims increased $1,703,862. In Chicago alone 91,000 persons received jobless benefits in May, compared with 80,880 who received $2,837,581 in April.

Delay Cos Consumer Millions a Profiteers Reap Great Harvest

Washington, D. C.—The U. S. Senate is fiddling while inflation burns like will throughout the nation.

The show-down fight for a strong OPA law to put out the blaze of shockingly increased prices got off to a woefully slow start in the "world's greatest deliberative body."

After breaking a week's parliamentary blockade which consumers millions while enriching profiteers, Senate leaders retreated from the firm stand taken by President Truman and gave their support to a compromise measure which cannot succeed in holding the price line.

A so-called "compromise" sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Barkley admittedly repudiates some of the basic principles enunciated by the President in his veto message on the original OPA extension law. However, Barkley expressed the belief that the President would sign his "compromise" bill if it is enacted.

The Barkley proposal would guarantee profits to producers above costs, but it does give the OPA some leeway in making exceptions for the protection of consumers.

However, the anti-OPA bloc led by Senator Taft, of Ohio served notice that they will oppose the Barkley bill with all their power and attempt to reenact the OPA bill in exactly the same form as the vetoed measure.

And Senator O'Daniel, of Texas, also issued warnings that he will make strenuous attempts to talk the OPA to death by launching a filibuster.

Thus, it appeared certain that the Senate will fiddle around at least another week, even if night sessions are called, before reaching a decision. Then the House of Representatives may take a few more days to act. Meanwhile, the American people are being victimized. Without OPA to protect them, prices for most commodities are soaring all over and throughout the nation.

But this is only the beginning. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that wholesale prices jumped 10 percent on the average during the first week in July. These increases will soon hit consumers in the vulnerable pocketbook, because there is bound to be a retail markup in addition.

As Marquis Childs, Washington news commentator, said in his syndicated column:

"Milk goes up 3 cents a quart. Robert Wason, of the National Association of Manufacturers, says consumers can cure high prices by not buying, which will be interesting news to those with small children.

Protests against the legislative debate of OPA continued to pour into Washington by the hundreds of thousands. With most members of Congress fearing re-election this Fall, there was a run on the market for headache cures as they tried to figure out the effect of a 50 percent increase in the cost of living in the next three months, just before Election Day.

You tell 'em!

Minton Succeeds Maloney As Head Of Glass Blowers

Philadelphia.—James Maloney, an officer of the Glass Bottle Blowers Association (AFL for 37 years and president of that union for the last 22 years, resigned as head of the organization in 1946, because of ill health.

Mr. Maloney joined the Glass Blowers in 1890, was elected to the Executive Board in 1906, became vice president in 1917 and was elected president in 1924 upon the death of John A. Dyer.

He was succeeded as president by Joseph F. Minton, a native of Washington, Penn. Mr. Minton was born November 17, 1911, worked for a time in the Hazell Atlas Glass Co., in that city and was appointed national representative by Mr. Maloney in 1937. The following year he became a member of the Executive Board. He was elected secretary-treasurer in 1943 and was made vice president April 1, 1946, upon the resignation of W. W. Campbell.

The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

SUPPLEMENT

SAVE FOOD—Help Relieve Famine Abroad

WILLIAM GREEN, President — WASHINGTON, D. C., FRIDAY, JULY 12, 1946 — GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer

House Labor Bloc Moves to Force Showdown on Minimum Wage Bill

Washington, D. C.—A last-minute drive to force minimum wage legislation to the floor of the House for a showdown vote was launched by Rep. Andrew J. Biemiller (D.), Wis., a leader of the House labor bloc, when he filed a petition to pry the measure from the Rules Committee.

The bill, approved by the Senate, but pigeon-holed by the House Rules group, would lift the statutory national minimum wage from 40 to 65 cents an hour.

With Congress racing toward adjournment, because every member of the House and one-third of the Senate will be up for re-election in November and is feverish to get home to campaign, there appeared a serious question whether the legislators "would bother" to consider this vital issue which would benefit four million "forgotten men and women" who produce at starvation wages, at prices essential to the necessity of all the American people.

In presenting his petition to discharge the Rules Committee from further jurisdiction on this bill, Rep. Biemiller said:

"It has become very obvious that a majority of the Rules Committee membership is endeavoring to block action on minimum wage legislation in this session. A discharge petition is the only effective method the friends of this legislation have to counter the delaying tactics of the Rules Committee."

"President Truman has repeatedly stated that there is no more important bill before the Congress. Our Nation is disgraced by the millions of our people who work for less than 65 cents an hour. Furthermore, such a condition is not good business. People who make only $25 a week are hardly good customers. It is high time the House of Representatives had an opportunity to debate and discuss this vital economic and social problem."

The minimum wage increase bill has been vigorously pressed by the American Federation of Labor and its affiliated units throughout the Nation. Following Senate passage it was approved by the House Labor Committee. However, under House procedure, it cannot be brought to a vote, except by the petition route without the sanction of the powerful Rules Committee. The group has refused to permit such action. The present law setting a 40-cent minimum means $16 a week for a 40-hour week.

Rep. Biemiller said he introduced the petition on behalf of the informal Congressional Committee for a Fair Minimum Wage, of which he is secretary. The group numbers nearly 100. To bring it to the floor for debate requires the signatures of 218 House members.

Rep. Clair Outland (D.) Calif., chairman of the informal House group which is pressing for action on the measure, called upon all friends of labor to sign the petition to support "an essential part of the President's program as outlined in January.

Steelman Warns Nation Must Hold Price Controls

Washington, D. C.—Grave warning that the Nation "stands at the crossroads" and must choose between disastrous inflation on the one hand or, on the other, a program of reduced Federal spending, a strong OPA, high taxes, and the "orderly and continued credit controls" was served on President Truman and Congress by John R. Steelman, director of the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion.

In a quarterly report on the country's progress toward reconversion, Mr. Steelman said that expenditures for the armed forces, covering nearly half of the Federal budget, "must be re-examined in the light of the present need for anti-inflationary action."

Possibility of economies in the Federal agencies were minimized by Mr. Steelman, who said they accounted for only 6 per cent of the costs.

Commenting later on the Steelman report in a news conference, President Truman pledged his Administration, to a reduction in Federal spending and declared that programs for the military and the veterans would be reviewed "to determine whether they can be reduced without endangering national security or causing unjustified hardships."

Both Mr. Truman and Mr. Steelman hailed the great strides which the country had taken toward production. Both were insistent upon controls to check the danger of runaway prices.

President Truman issued a special statement on his reconversion director's report and made a point during the news conference of reading some of its highlights.

Mr. Steelman's statement said in part:

"Up to June 30 the setbacks which we suffered had been disproportionately magnified.

"The facts are that production by midyear reached the highest level ever attained in peacetime.

"More people are working now than ever before—4,500,000 more than in 1941, our highest prewar year. Particularly gratifying is the fact that eight out of every ten returned veterans already have jobs; but we shall not be satisfied until the rest of our veterans have suitable employment opportunities.

"The number of people looking for work was only slightly above 2,500,000 by the end of June.

"Although public attention was focused on the soft-coal and railroad strikes, the great majority of workers remained on their jobs. Fewer man days were lost in all industries due to industrial disputes were recorded during the last quarter than in the first three months of 1946.

"Our people are earning more money and they are purchasing a greater volume of goods than in any previous peacetime.

"We are meeting in full our commitments to ship food to the starving peoples of the world.

"We have made more progress than many thought possible toward providing new houses for our people.

"The Administration is determined to do everything within its power, under the authority granted by the Congress, to maintain the gains we have made and to continue moving toward our goal.

"To this end, I have directed Mr. Steelman to coordinate to the fullest extent the activities of the executive agencies of the Government which can assist both industry and labor to attain the high volume of production necessary to curb inflation.

"To supplement pending price-control measures the Administration is reviewing its final and monetary policies. Government expenditures will be reduced. All deferrable construction and public work projects not needed for Federal funds will be studied with a view to saving strategic materials and diminishing inflationary pressures.

"Military and veterans program costs which have been rising above earlier estimates will be reviewed to determine where they can be reduced without endangering national security or causing unjustified hardships. All these measures are necessary but they are no substitute for specific price control until full production is attained."

Senate Gives Green Light To Skyrocketing of Prices

People Pay, Pay and Pay In Wake of Stripped OPA

Washington, D. C.—The Senate voted to outlaw any future OPA price ceilings on meat, poultry, eggs, food made from these products, and on milk, butter, gasoline and oil.

Here are the results, as learned the hard way by a stunned Nation:

MEAT—Cattle prices break all records in the 81-year history of the Chicago livestock market. Beef cattle sell for $23 per 100 pounds, huge climb to 50 cents above previous high figure to $17.75, or $4.90 above the OPA ceiling. Market observers said they expected beef would go above $30.

STEAK—In the Nation's capital, steak sells for prices ranging from $1.10 to $1.85 a pound, depending upon the grade and the decision of the butcher.

HAMBURGER—Selling at 78 cents to $1 a pound.

LAMB—In Chicago market from $20 to $20.50 in one day.

PORK CHOPS—Upped to 94 cents a pound.

RIB ROAST—Reported available at $1.25 a pound.

BACON—Selling at prices ranging from 75 to 98 cents a pound.

MILK—Selling at 22 cents a quart in some areas, with indications of further increases.

ICE CREAM—Expected to follow milk price jump.

RENTS—Up anywhere from 30 to 300 percent in areas where no state or local controls are in effect.

COTTON—Increase of $5 a bale in single day, to daily limit.

WHEAT—Jumps 17 cents a bushel in day.

SHOES—Leather up 20 to 30 percent above OPA ceilings, shoe manufacturers' prices up 10 to 15 percent with prospect of further jumps.

OPA economists, after a careful study of the swift spiraling of prices, predicted retail beef prices will jump 50 percent and pork will increase 30 percent.

The headlong gain in cattle prices, reflecting the Senate's action in voting down the restoration of meat price ceilings, was just a beginning, according to the livestock traders, who said prices might go soon to $30. The Associated Press quoted a Chicago trader as saying:

"There is nothing in sight to stop it. These current high receipts will peter out before long. Mostly they're stock which has been held back for the last couple of months in expectation of higher prices. When they're gone—hang onto your hats!"

A report by the Bureau of Labor Statistics on wholesale prices of 28 basic commodities went up another point, to 253, or 17 percent above the June 28 figure. Its primary market prices on 900 commodities we. up 4 percent in a week, the most rapid rise since September, 1939.

Dun & Bradstreet's index of 30 basic commodities rose to its highest point since the computation was begun in 1932.

Senator Wherry of Nebraska, Republican leader, took this form:

Average prices of hogs on the hoof are up 35 percent and those of beef cattle are up 20 to 25 percent. If packers and retailers increased their prices only by the increases in cattle prices—that is, if they did not expand their mark-ups—the average price of pork would go up about 4½ cents a pound and beef at retail would be 9 cents a pound higher. This would be an increase of about 12 percent for pork and 25 percent for beef.

But these prices do not include offsets to the subsidy payments formerly going to cattle feeders and processors. To compensate for this loss, the retail price would have to rise another 15 percent.

Green, Googe Protest Army's Acts Against Unionism In Atom Plants

Washington, D. C.—Strong protest against attempts of some high Army officers to cripple efforts of AFL representatives to obtain a fair election at the three atomic energy plants in Oak Ridge, Tenn., was registered by AFL President William Green and George L. Googe, director of the AFL's southern organizing drive, in a conference with Secretary of War Patterson.

The AFL Atomic Trades and Labor Council, comprising the building and metal trades unions, has petitioned local unions at Oak Ridge, earlier had petitioned the National Labor Relations Board for an election to determine the collective bargaining representative of the 20,000 employes of the Tennessee Eastman Corp., Carbide and Chemicals Co. and Kellex Corp. said Co. The election the NLRB indicated, would be held on a plantwide basis, whether by the combined setup in the huge TVA development.

Though the majority of the workers in the atomic plants are drawn from the ranks of the AFL, no effort was made during the war to organize them on a labor union basis because the War Department's security regulations, it was understood, forbade. However, the men would be free to vote on the issue when the war ended.

James A. Wilson, coordinator of the AFL unions at Oak Ridge, in a memorandum to the War Department, took various steps while the policy of the Army officials there, which, he declared, amounted to a "breach of faith" with the AFL.

"You stopped us from delivering our literature and leaflets to the people of Oak Ridge," he charged. "You told us that we must confine our distribution of this literature to the gates of the three plants. Then you issued an order that we no longer would be permitted to appear at the gates. You said that only the men who work in the plants and company badges would be permitted to enter the Roane-Anderson area.

"It is plainly evident that this is a scheme to bring our active members in the plants out on the line, where their identity can be obtained and termination notices issued, the men fired, notified when to vacate their homes and ordered to be off within 15 days.

"Because of such actions it is impossible for us in the AFL to contact our members or those who wish to become members. The Army is trampling on every sacred fundamental principle of free American life. It is destroying freedom of speech, of the press and of assembly. While our boys were freeing Europe's war-torn countries, your army here was gradually establishing a concentration camp.

Firemen, Oilers Hear Green Assail Enemies of Labor

Chicago.—Anti-union forces in national and state legislative bodies were assailed by AFL President William Green in an address before the 46th international convention of the Firemen and Oilers here. He hailed the plumbing as a triumph for labor the recent vote by Gov. Davis of Louisiana of a bill to outlaw closed shops in the state.

Declaring that the AFL would never join hands with Communists, Mr. Green called upon the union for the greatest possible unity in guarding against infiltration of those who may attempt to destroy organized labor from within.

Impressive gains in membership and great strides in the improvement of wages and working conditions of its members were revealed in the report of President John F. McNamara.

Echoing the latter's contention was that since pilots were now flying newer and faster ships they had greater responsibility and were therefore entitled to higher pay. The company maintained that the wage demands by the pilots were "astronomical" and would not be met.

It was estimated, unofficially, that a reconversion wage increase would raise the average pay of all pilots in the top grade by about $2,000 a year.

MORE CITIES REDUCING WORK HOURS OF CLERKS

Chicago.—A steadily increasing trend toward a shorter work week in addition is reducing working hours of white-collar workers and clerks to 40 hours with pay, it was disclosed in a survey by the International City Managers' Association. Statements of city employes who work less than 40 hours a week has increased six percent in the past year, the report showed.

The survey indicated that larger cities usually have shorter work weeks than do smaller communities. Washington reports average two weeks for white collar employes in 97 percent of the 931 cities covered by the survey and credit is given these workers in 648 cities reporting.

Pilots' Pay Raise Is Urged by Board

Washington, D. C.—Pay raises for pilots employed by Transcontinental & Western Air, Inc., ranging from about $600 to $2,000 a year, were recommended by a Presidential fact-finding board.

The Air Line Emergency Board, headed by Justice George E. Bushnell of the Michigan Supreme Court, has set up conditions on which the pilots, as members of the Air Line Pilots' Association, AFL. Others on the board were William H. Davis, also of Washington and Dr. John A. Lapp of Chicago. The report was approved by President Truman and its contents were made public at the White House.

The fact-finders' decision on the pay of pilots and co-pilots for flying heavier, larger and faster four-motor planes, known as Skyliners and Constellations, is both domestic and international significance as well as members were revealed in the report of President John F. McNamara.

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RICHARDSON BOOK AIDS FIRE FIGHTERS' CLAIMS

Washington, D. C.—The first comprehensive analysis of occupational diseases which fire fighters face on the subject is presented in a book written by George J. Richardson, secretary-treasurer of the International Association of Fire Fighters (AFL), and Dr. Max D. Kosbelek.

The book, just off the press, is expected to be invaluable in strengthening claims for illness or injury incurred in the performance of their duties.

It contains a collection of case histories compiled by the international union over a long period of years and long written by Dr. Kosbelek from their families; some knowledge of the possible after effects of seemingly minor injuries. It points out that a severe burns, a fractured limb or fatal explosions are readily recognized by communities in which claims are presented, but that lesser injuries which may lead to chronic handicap, disability, pneumonia, tuberculosis or other grave ailments often are overlooked or brushed aside.

GEORGE W. MILLNER DIES; OFFICER OF LONGSHOREMEN

New York City.—George William Millner, 58, of Norfolk, Va., the first labor man to be named a vice president for life of the Atlantic Coast district, International Longshoremen's Association (AFL), died in a New York Hospital of a heart ailment.

National Health Bill Urged By Biemiller

Washington, D. C.—A strong plea for enactment of the Wagner-Murray-Dingell National Health Bill, firmly endorsed by the AFL, was presented by Rep. Biemiller (D.), Wis., before the Senate Committee on Education and Labor.

"Workers face four great hazards in our industrial world," he told the committee. "These are industrial accidents, old age, unemployment and ill health. Protection against the first three has been established as a fixed policy of the Government. This bill would provide for the fourth—sickness."

Mr. Biemiller said he endorsed the bill "because it expands the policy of social insurance as contrasted with public charity" and would provide medical care for more people.

"It does what the American Medical Association, private insurance companies and even the States cannot do—establish a uniform and equitable system for the collection and distribution of funds for provision of medical care to our citizens," he added.

TROLLEYMEN GET RAISE

San Francisco, Calif.—Members of the Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employes (AFL) here, have been granted raises from 97 cents to $1.10 an hour, with other workers to will receive a 12.83 percent increase.

Rail Maintenance Union Heads For Annual Convention In Detroit

Detroit.—Headed by AFL President William Green, members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes (AFL) were converging on Detroit for the opening of their 29th regular convention in mid-July.

Reports of the union officers are expected to show remarkable gains in every direction—membership, finances, Thomas J. Kennedy, chairman of the Railroad Retirement Board; Robert L. Glenn, director of transport personnel, Office of Defense Transportation; William J. Patterson, director of the Interstate Commerce Commission; President George M. Harrison of the Railway Clerks, and I. M. Ornburo, secretary-treasurer, AFL Union Label Trades Department.

The amazing progress made by the union will be shown in the report of Mr. Hall, secretary, when he turns the field of the maintenance men and to effectively illustrated.

The brotherhood now has 16 percent of the Nation's railroad mileage under its banner. They decades ago it had only 74 percent. In Canada the union is close to the 100 percent mark. The brotherhood is also fast gaining agency on 241 line-haul roads and 97 switching and terminal companies, embracing 264,783 miles of track.

JOBLESS PAID $53,982,201

Detroit, Mich.—During the first six months of 1946, unemployed industrial workers in Michigan were paid $53,982,201, according to Eugene T. Berger, executive director of the Michigan Unemployment Compensation Commission. Benefit payment funds available as of June 30, were $217,117,625.

BAKERY DRIVERS GET RAISE

Kansas City, Mo.—In a new contract bakery owners and drivers of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (AFL) have agreed on weekly increases of $6.50 for wholesale route drivers and $3.75 for retail drivers. They also will receive increases in commissions, while the minimum weekly scale is hiked to $44.

Management Finds Real Value In 'Collective Bargaining at Work'

New York City.—Following is a reproduction, in part, of an article written by Thomas S. Holden, president of the Holden Corp., and published in the Investment Record" clearly demonstrating how both labor and management can and do benefit by "Collective Bargaining at Work."

By Thomas S. Holden

Industrial peace and sound employer-employe relationships in New York's building industry during the next five years are the objectives of the master agreement recently concluded between the Building Trades Employers' Association of New York City and the building and construction Trades Council of Greater New York and Long Island.

Both Thomas J. Meany, secretary-treasurer of the American Federation of Labor, who signed the document as a witness, as "a real triumph for the American system of collective bargaining." The agreement resulted from many months of discussion and negotiation by a 14-man joint committee of the two associations. It was ratified by 23 constituent local associations of the BTEA and 26 constituent unions of the Council.

Approval at this result through established bargaining procedures was no mean achievement in a period of labor unrest. It covered wage demands, strikes and work stoppages. As Mr. Meany said, there was no coercion or threat in the New York building industry, no policeman or political party involved in bringing labor and management together.

Influence of the master agreement has already spread from building into the heavy construction activity in New York City. It was hailed as a pattern for the recent pact between the Heavy Construction Council and the General Contractors Association, two organizations representing respectively the unions and the employers engaged primarily in heavy engineering work. It has been reported that New York's new agreement is being actively studied and discussed in a number of other cities with a view to working out similar arrangements.

The agreement outlaws strikes and lockouts, establishes wage increases in accordance with the Little Steel formula, standardizes the workday as eight hours and the work week as five days, strengthens existing machinery for arbitration of jurisdictional and other disputes, sets up a permanent industry board with the functions of regulation of the industry and general enforcement of the master agreement.

SENATORS REJECT BAN ON FOREMEN'S UNIONS

Washington, D. C.—Attempts of foes of labor to ban unionization of foremen and other supervisory employes through an amendment to the appropriations bill for the Labor Department and Federal Security Agency failed when the Senate rejected the proposal by a vote of 34 to 31. Nearly 31 members absent.

The Senate action was interpreted as conclusive evidence that congressional moves for enactment of anti-labor legislation at this session are doomed.

There appeared little opportunity for any further labor legislation at the current session, in view of the fact that the House Rules Committee has blocked action on the minimum wage bill and the measure on unemployment compensation has been held up several months by the Ways and Means Committee.

YOUR TAXES AND MINE

This is the first of a series of 12 articles on tax problems affecting every person in the Nation, written for the AFL Weekly News Service by Arthur A. Elder, tax consultant of the AFL's Tax Committee and a vice president of the American Federation of Teachers.

Who Pays? What?

By ARTHUR A. ELDER

Who pays the taxes in the United States? Before we adopted the personal income tax, and that took quite a fight—the cost of federal government was paid by indirect taxes and by excise taxes alone.

The income tax has spread the burden so that it is shared by low and high income earners.

But there is a constant jockeying between the two groups, and the same people who fought against the income tax are doing their best to shift the burden as much as possible onto the low-income groups.

A progressive tax system is one under which taxes are levied at higher rates on taxpayers as their income increases. This system can be upset by the proposed constitutional amendment limiting income taxes to 25 percent which has been endorsed by several state legislatures.

It can be upset, too, when business profits or personal incomes are not taxed properly, because of loop-holes in our tax laws, or because of too liberal exemptions to the point where people with incomes as low as $10 per week are paying income taxes. It is also true in those states which depend so largely on sales and excise taxes for their revenue.

When the balance is upset, so that a disproportionate burden is borne by the lower income groups, trouble begins. For consumption is curbed, and the downward trend towards depression is begun.

High income earners insist that their taxes must not be too high, because then the incentive to production is reduced. They want to put the cart before the horse. Production needs most the incentive of high purchasing power and distribution of new enterprises. Purchasing power and new enterprise are best promoted by the lower taxes on the lower end of the income scale.